

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USDEL ASWAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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SECTO 164

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: SECVISIT: REVISION OF SUMMARY OF REMARKS TO PRESS BY

SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD, DAMASCUS, MARCH 9, 1975

REF: SECTO 136

1. REFTEL TRANSMITTED INCOMPLETE SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
IN BRIEF SESSION WITH PRESS BY PRESIDENT ASAD PRIOR TO MEETING
WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER. MORE COMPLETE SUMMARY WHICH SUPERCEDES
REFTEL FOLLOWS:

QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, DO YOU THINK ANOTHER AGREEMENT BETWEEN
EGYPT AND ISREAL IS A GOOD IDEA?

PRESIDENT ASAD: I HAVE NO IDEA. DR. KISSINGER IS SAYING THERE IS
NO AGREEMENT YET.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I HAVE 15 ASSISTANTS ON THE AIRPLANE

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CONDUCTING THE NEGOTIATION FOR ME.

QUESTION: IS SYRIA SEEKING OR DOES IT WANT ANOTHER INTERIM ACCORD ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS BEFORE A FULL SETTLEMENT?

PRESIDENT ASAD: WE WOULD AGREE TO AN INTERIM AGREEMENT PROVIDED IT TAKES PLACE ON ALL THE FRONTS. WE ARE AGAINST SEPARATE, PARTIAL AGREEMENTS. IF YOU WOULD HAVE ASKED DR. KISSINGER ON THE WAY HERE, YOU WOULD KNOW THIS.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I HAVE TOLD THEM ALREADY, MR. PRESIDENT. THEY DID NOT BELIEVE ME. THEY HAVE TO HEAR IT FROM YOU.

QUESTION: THERE IS SOME CONFUSION ABOUT WHETHER YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A SEPARATE PEACE TREATY WITH ISRAEL IF ISRAEL WITHDRAWS FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, THE GAZA STRIP AND THE WEST BANK. COULD YOU CLEAR UP THAT CONFUSION FOR US, MR. PRESIDENT?

PRESIDENT ASAD: WE ARE READY TO END THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY WITH ISRAEL IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 338, WHICH STIPULATES THAT ISRAEL SHOULD WITHDRAW COMPLETELY FROM ALL THE ARAB TERRITORIES IT HAS OCCUPIED SINCE 1967 AND IF THERE IS RESTORATION OF THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS.

QUESTION: I ASKED ABOUT A PEACE TREATY, MR. PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT ASAD: IN RESOLUTION 242 THERE IS NOTHING CALLED A PEACE TREATY. IN ANY CASE WE ARE NOT ENAMORED OF TREATIES, EVEN IF THEY ARE TREATIES OF FRIENDSHIP. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS TO MOVE TOWARD A CONDITION OF PEACE AND NOT JUST TO SIGN TREATIES. AND AN END OF THE STATE OF WAR IS WHAT WE ARE SEEKING AND IS STIPULATED IN RESOLUTION 242.

QUESTION: IF THERE IS A UNIFIED COMMAND BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS, WOULD THIS GIVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SYRIA TO REPRESENT THE PALESTINIANS AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE?

PRESIDENT ASAD: IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE RESOLUTION TAKEN BY THE POLITICAL COMMAND. IN A SENSE YOU ARE RIGHT; IT WOULD GIVE THE PALESTINIANS THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO GENEVA. BUT IT COULD ALSO PREVENT SYRIA FROM GOING TO GENEVA. IT DEPENDS ON UNCLASSIFIED

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THE DECISION OF THE POLITICAL COMMAND. IN ESSENCE IT MEANS EITHER WE MIGHT GO TOGETHER OR STAY AWAY TOGETHER.

QUESTION: IF THERE IS A JOINT COMMAND ESTABLISHED, IS IT IMMINENT, AND IF SO, HOW IMMINENT?

SECRETARY: MY HARDEST NEGOTIATION ISN'T HERE, MR. PRESIDENT; IT IS ON THE AIRPLANE.

PRESIDENT ASAD: YOU ARE RIGHT. IT IS ONLY 12 HOURS SINCE I MADE MY STATEMENT; IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL. BUT WITHIN ONE HOUR OF MY STATEMENT, I RECEIVED A TELEGRAM FROM CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE YASIR ARAFAT EXPRESSING WELCOME TO THE PROPOSAL. THE LEADERSHIP SHOULD CONVENE AND STUDY THE MATTER. IF THEY DECIDE NOW THAT THEY ARE READY, WE WILL BE READY NOW TO UNITE. CERTAINLY THEY WILL AGREE.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF THIS ON YOUR JOINT COMMAND WITH THE EGYPTIANS?

PRESIDENT ASAD: WHO KNOWS? IF NOT NOW, THEN IN THE FUTURE, WE MIGHT BECOME A TRIPARTITE COMMAND.

QUESTION: THANK YOU VERY MUCH, MR. PRESIDENT.
KISSINGER

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